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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 662  
By Cohen

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Joseph Sweat upon 27 years of exemplary service to the Tennessee Municipal League.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should recognize those exemplary citizens who, throughout their careers, have rendered astute and dedicated service to the people of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, it is equally fitting that we should pay tribute to a distinguished Tennessean who through his diligence, professionalism and unwavering commitment has made significant contributions toward making this state a better place to live; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Sweat is one such notable individual, who has given unselfishly of himself, his time and his remarkable talents to advance the public good during almost three decades of meritorious service with the Tennessee Municipal League; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Sweat received his bachelor's degree in English Literature from the University of Memphis and attended Vanderbilt Law School; in the mid-1960s, he created the Vanderbilt News Bureau and served as its first director; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Sweat proudly served in the United States Navy; and

WHEREAS, during his admirable service in the Navy, Joseph Sweat began his illustrious newspaper career as the editor of *Sandpoint Skylines*, a weekly newspaper at the Sandpoint Naval Air Station in Seattle, Washington; and

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WHEREAS, as a reporter for the Associated Press and the Memphis *Commercial Appeal*, Joseph Sweat covered many of the important news stories of our time, including the Memphis garbage workers strike, the subsequent assassination of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., the Newark riots and the civil rights movement throughout the South; and

WHEREAS, over the years, Mr. Sweat has written both fiction and non-fiction; his estimable work has appeared in *Harper's*, *Billboard*, *Nashville Magazine* and numerous newspapers across the nation, and he once wrote a national country music column for the Associated Press; and

WHEREAS, in 1971, Joseph Sweat began his exemplary career with the Tennessee Municipal League; his numerous and peerless talents were appropriately recognized when he was appointed TML's Executive Director in 1982; and

WHEREAS, throughout his illustrious tenure, Joseph Sweat has been integrally involved in numerous improvements and innovations for the Tennessee Municipal League; he was instrumental in the creation of the TML Risk Management Pool, which provides low-cost insurance to Tennessee cities and the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund, a program which provides low-cost loans to cities; and

WHEREAS, he has served on the boards of both the Pool and the Bond Fund since 1982; and

WHEREAS, most recently, Mr. Sweat has been working with purpose and commitment and utilizing all of TML's considerable resources to craft a sweeping annexation reform law in Tennessee, with special emphasis on preserving the essential abilities of municipalities to keep the engines of economic growth running for the state; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Sweat also helped to establish the Catholic Public Policy Commission in Tennessee in the late 1970s, an organization that develops public policy for the Roman Catholic Church in the state; he served this worthy organization with the utmost ability and dedication as its Executive Secretary. In this role, he helped the CPPC convey its policies

to the Tennessee General Assembly and worked to pass legislation improving welfare, health care, prisons and education; and

WHEREAS, he also later adroitly served as editor of the *Tennessee Register*, a Roman Catholic weekly newspaper. At that time, Tennessee had only one Roman Catholic Diocese and the *Tennessee Register* was the Roman Catholic newspaper for the whole state. Joseph Sweat was the editor under Bishop Joseph Durick and courageously tackled civil rights, the death penalty, and church reform issues, despite opposition and criticism; and

WHEREAS, from 1990-1992, Joseph Sweat lent his time and immeasurable talents to an international team that worked assiduously to promote a democratic government in Bulgaria and the Ukraine. He is responsible for developing the local government structures section of the new Bulgarian Constitution; and

WHEREAS, realizing that citizenship entails many responsibilities as well as privileges, Joseph Sweat has been a valuable member of numerous boards and commissions, having served with acumen and acuity on the boards of the Tennessee and National American Civil Liberties Union and the National League of Cities; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Sweat has been the recipient of numerous awards and accolades, including the prestigious John G. Stutz Award from the National League of Cities "in recognition of contributions made to the advancement of municipal government through outstanding and faithful service"; and

WHEREAS, in 1994, Mr. Sweat received the Good Guys Award from the Nashville Political Caucus for his long-term support of women in elected and appointed political offices and in all spheres of life; and

WHEREAS, after 16 years of outstanding service as Executive Director of the Tennessee Municipal League, Joseph Sweat is particularly proud of *Tennessee Town and City*, which, as publisher, he transformed into an exciting and influential newspaper that promotes city

issues and concerns and has won national recognition and awards. Joseph Sweat will continue his indelible legacy at TML as the publisher of *Tennessee Town & City*; and

WHEREAS, he plans to use his increased spare time to finish a book on which he has been working; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his many professional and civic accomplishments, Joseph Sweat is most fortunate to share love and companionship with his always understanding and supportive wife, Marilyn Edwards. He is also the loving father of three sons and one daughter and is the proud grandfather of one grandson; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Sweat has served the Tennessee Municipal League with honor, professionalism, devotion, dignity and fortitude for nearly thirty years, and this remarkable gentleman should be appropriately recognized as he leaves the post of Executive Director to devote more time to his first love, journalism; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and commend Joseph Sweat for his diligent and dexterous service to the Tennessee Municipal League and the citizens of this great state, and wish him much success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.